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—Gunnar D. Kumlien

THE Commonweal

The President and The Atom

by Christopher Emmet

Religion in the West End

by Sam Hynes

Volume LIX, No. 19 February 12, 1954 Twenty Cents

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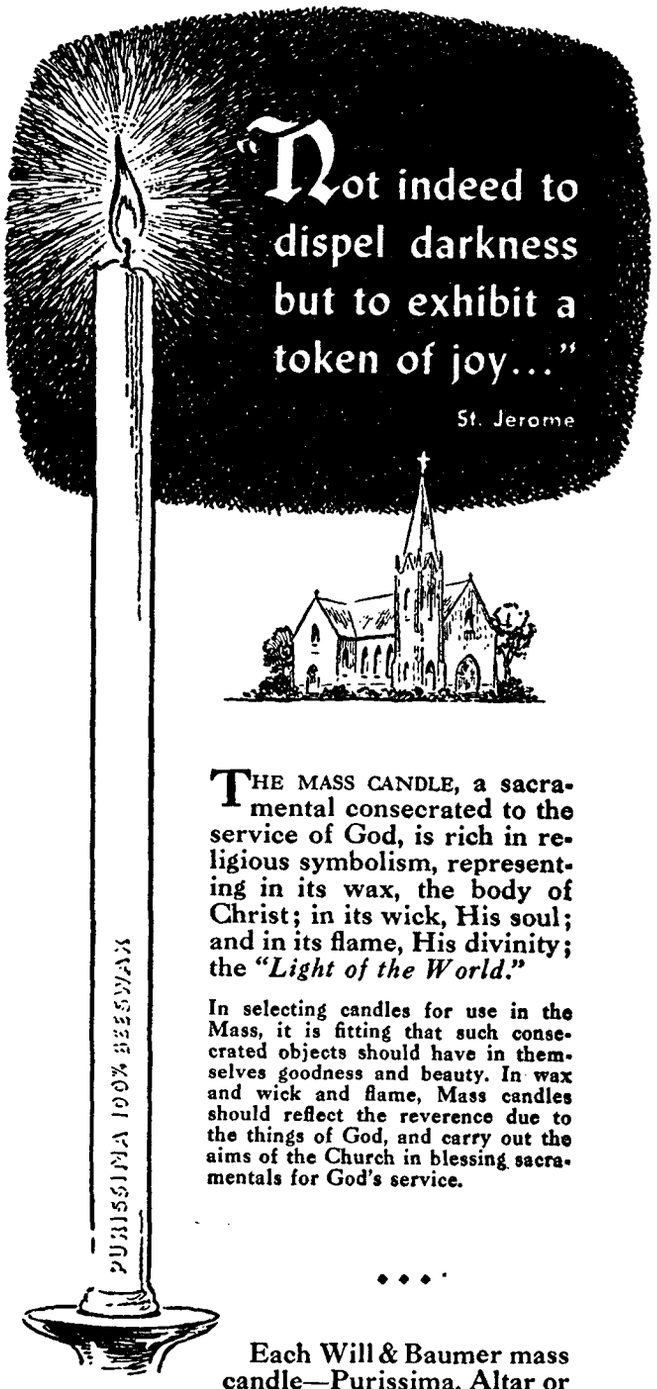

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THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1954, in the U. S. A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

U. S. and Canada, $7 a year. Foreign, $9. Single copies, 20c.

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

THE PROSPECTS FOR HOUSING

LIVING as they do in a mass-production culture, Americans do not take shortages easily. During World War II there were temporary inconveniences. Nylons were hard to come by, sugar was scarce, and tires were strictly rationed. But these were merely war-born shortages, and they were accepted as part of the price of victory. Once the war was won, U.S. citizens expected the shortages to end quickly, and they were not disappointed.

The most striking exception to this general rule is housing. Both from a social and an economic point of view, housing is a key industry, even though it is notable that it remains to a large extent a handicraft industry in a mass-production economy. The U.S. has had a housing shortage for a long time now—in fact, Americans are in some danger of becoming accustomed to it.

People easily forget how far back the housing problem goes. For many years before World War II we failed to produce houses in the quantity needed, a failure which led to grossly inadequate housing for millions of American families. The postwar housing shortage only dramatized this basic problem. Today the flight from the city by those who can afford to move is going forward at gold-rush proportions, and it requires no great detective ability to see that successive rings of slums and blighted areas are destroying America's cities.

Private industry in this country has never been able to build housing for low-income groups at a profit. And by the time housing has passed through many hands and is old enough for the lower-income families to afford, it is well on its way to becoming slum property. Federal intervention for the purpose of clearing slums and building low-rent housing units was an answer to this long-range problem.

Generally, governmental housing programs are considered to be part of the "liberal" cause, and there is no doubt that liberals have been vigorous in support of such plans. But labeling public housing as "liberal" can be misleading. After considerable study, such a respected conservative as the late Senator Taft, for instance, sponsored a public housing bill in 1949 which called for the construction of 135,000 public housing units a year for six years. Senator Taft took the position he did, not because he had changed his philosophy, but simply because he saw no other way of dealing with the problem.

The objective attitude displayed by Senator Taft on this matter should, we think, be everyone's guide in considering the housing question. What is needed is a problem-centered approach rather than what might be called an ideological one. Our national goal should be adequate housing for American families, a goal from which we are now far removed. If this objective can be achieved without federal funds, so much the better. If not, federal action should be limited to just the amount necessary.

PRESIDENT Eisenhower has now submitted his housing program to Congress. All in all, his suggestions reflect the distinction made by the President between his and the Democratic Administrations: the housing program seems to be "liberal" as far as human problems are concerned, "conservative" in its economic approach.

In some respects, the Eisenhower housing program reflects a real effort to take a fresh look at housing, and this is certainly a good thing. There is, for example, a provision for one hundred per cent, government-backed mortgages so that families displaced by slum clearance can buy low-cost homes with no down-payment. The experts will debate this provision, but it does represent a new try at a knotty question. The Eisenhower program includes more liberal provisions for financing modernization and repair of older buildings, and it calls for long-range plans to help cities in slum-clearance measures.

In general, the Eisenhower program calls for less government in housing. It asks only for thirty-five thousand public housing units a year for the next four years. The Administration clearly seems to feel that if the government should not get out of the housing picture entirely, it should take one step into the background. In housing, as in the Eisenhower medical program, the government would not replace

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private initiative but would stand behind it as a hedge against catastrophe, something like a large-scale Lloyd's.

The Eisenhower housing program, therefore, is in keeping with the Administration's general economic and political philosophy. To say that we are highly optimistic about the results of the program would be overstating the case. Even the announced goal of one million houses a year will not, we think, solve America's housing problem. But no one has yet come up with an ideal, long-range solution, and the test of this Eisenhower pudding is yet to come. If the Administration can work out a system in which low-cost housing can be built and slums cleared largely by private industry, it will be a great step forward. Meanwhile the leaders of the housing industry—both labor and management—should not underestimate the challenge that has been given to them. The problem is now very much in their laps.

SEMANTICS

FIRST there were the Communists. Hitler said to Germany: "I will save you from Communism." So Hitler became a leading anti-Communist, and in those days if you were an anti-Communist, the Communists said you must be for Hitler, so you were called a fascist. Then, for a short time, Hitler and Stalin were bound to a pact. For that short time if you were an anti-Communist, you were not called a fascist: you were called a warmonger and an imperialist. Then Hitler attacked Russia. If you were still anti-Communist, you were again called a fascist. Then Hitler and his Reich were *kaput*. For good and ample reasons the tide of popular feeling turned against Russia. A new ideology called Anti-Communism was added to the American scene. If you were against this ideology, you were called an anti-Anti-Communist. And that is how things stand today.

Maybe we all ought to start all over with a neglected word. The word is 'democrat'—a believer in democracy and in the democratic processes. If the word had been used from the beginning the story would be the same, but the semantics might be a little less confusing. Then it would go this way: Hitler became an anti-Communist and if you were a democrat you were called a fascist. Then Hitler and Stalin joined together and if you were a democrat you were called a warmonger and an imperialist. Then Hitler attacked Russia, and if you were still a democrat, you were called a fascist again. Then feeling turned against Russia, Anti-Communism appeared: if you yet persisted in being a democrat you were called an anti-Anti-Communist. And that is how things stand today.

The Society for the Restoration of Lost Positives —which has done such good work in rediscovering words like 'couth,' 'kempt,' 'ert' and 'ept'—might have its Political Affairs Officer look into this.

NEXT WEEK

WILLIAM V. SHANNON writes of the state of civil liberties under the Eisenhower Administration.

"On November 23, the President in accepting an award from the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, harkened back to the frontier days in his hometown of Abilene where Wild Bill Hickok enforced the law as federal marshal. Mr. Eisenhower said the code of Abilene was: 'Meet anyone face to face with whom you disagree. You could not sneak up on him from behind, do any damage to him without suffering the penalty of an outraged citizen. If you met him face to face and took the same risk he did, you could get away with almost anything, as long as the bullet was in the front.' It was a nostalgic and touching analogy. It is not one which the Administration has been able to translate into effective terms today."

TAX POLICIES AS WEAPONS

WHEN duties were levied by nations against various foreign imports, the power to tax came to be used on a wide scale for purposes other than revenue. In recent years the practice has greatly expanded. Few would now deny that this power of governments should be utilized deliberately to foster prosperity and to ward off economic decline.

The Administration and its critics agree that cutting taxes is one way to stimulate the national economy. Where they differ is the question of emphasis. With unemployment edging up to the two-and-a-half-million mark, the argument devolves upon which taxes should be cut.

Is it more important for American business to have more funds to spend—to maintain and expand production? Or does the individual consumer himself supply the key? The Administration places greater hope in business as the good provider.

It was once widely held that if those at the top of the economic heap do better, benefits will trickle down to those below. But there is more to the current recession problem than that. What is it that sets the wheels of industry in motion and keeps them humming? It is effective consumer demand.

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Faith has a lot to do with keeping the national economy going at full stride. Here again security of employment, adequate wages and duly apportioned individual tax burdens go far in building up a psychology of confidence. It remains to be demonstrated whether this is less important for turning the economic tide than extra funds—and confidence—for leaders of enterprise.

THE NORWALK EPISODE

THE action of a Norwalk, Conn., Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in searching out "Communistically" inclined citizens and submitting their names to the Federal Bureau of Investigation was probably not, in itself, a great danger to the Republic. For one thing, the Republic is strong enough to withstand quite a lot of foolishness. For another, the Federal Bureau of Investigation should be sophisticated enough to recognize foolishness when it appears. It seems unlikely that an investigation of many Norwalk citizens would have been undertaken on "evidence" the VFW could offer.

But the Norwalk veterans' action cannot be considered merely "in itself." It must also be considered in the context of America, 1954, and here it provides another footnote on the domestic follies of our time. For this is a decade in which professional patriots have asserted themselves with such success that they have become a national menace. It has long been past time for someone (besides the liberals) to tell them "stop."

The Norwalk veterans have now been told—and in no uncertain terms. There's been a rush to get into the act of deploring their zeal. Republican Senators, American Legion officials, and respectable civic groups have joined the liberal regulars in decrying such a danger of patriotic "excesses" as was present in the veterans' sleuthing.

And so this episode has served a useful purpose. Foolishness has been reprimanded, excesses have been deplored, and a good many unexpected voices have joined the chorus against hysteria. Norwalk, and the Republic, survive. One is, after all this, tempted to feel a certain sympathy for the thoroughly told-off Veterans of Foreign Wars. They did, no doubt, mean well.

ATOMIC CONTROL

IN the past six months there has been a quiet, largely undiscussed, almost uncontested revolution in United States defense policy. The import of this change is described by Mr. Christopher Emmet in the article which follows these editorials.

Mr. Emmet also discusses the President's plan for pooling a limited amount of atomic materials for peaceful purposes. This magazine is wholly in agreement with Mr. Emmet's observations on the implications of the new defense policy, but we would take a somewhat different view of the usefulness of the atomic pool proposal.

The Baruch Plan was primarily intended, of course, to prevent atomic war by a strict control of atomic weapons. It would have had the secondary advantage of cracking the Iron Curtain, threatening the monolithic secrecy of the Soviet State, as the international inspection teams would have had free access to all parts of Russia.

Now, seven years later, the Baruch Plan is no nearer acceptance than it was when it was first proposed. And there is no reason to believe that the Soviet Union will accept it in the foreseeable future. It is undoubtedly an admirable plan, its logic and justice unanswerable, as Mr. Emmet points out, but unfortunately the Soviet Union is not going to accept it. Hence, except for its propaganda advantage, it is useless. It would appear that the Soviet Union simply is not willing to give up the required amount of national sovereignty.

Mr. Emmet feels that we should continue to hammer on the Baruch Plan, since it embodies the only practical terms for complete atomic control. And he argues that Soviet acceptance of the atomic pool plan may bring a dangerous relaxation in the West, without solving any of the real problems. This is quite true; yet this magazine feels that the atomic pool plan still has merit. If we are to reject every plan except the Baruch Plan, then it would seem that we are rejecting the possibility of any atomic control at all. The pool proposal solves no basic problems, but would, if accepted, be at least a beginning, an agreement on a point where Soviet and American interests coincide. It would be a beginning which might never have a middle or an end, but to exclude even the beginning seems to be an abandonment of all hope. We must assume that eventually there is a point at which the Americans and the Soviets can find at least limited agreement. (This also assumes that neither the Soviets nor the Americans are mad enough to *want* atomic war—a point which must be assumed.)

Thus, it seems that the atomic pool proposal is worth going ahead with. It ought not to be touted as being more than it actually is, but it ought not be dismissed because it is not as much as we might wish it to be. If we are to continue to live in the same world with the Soviet Union, it is, we believe, better to have a minimum of agreement, even on a secondary issue, than to have no agreement at all.

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The President and the Atom

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT'S UN PLAN AND HIS DEFENSE PROGRAM

CHRISTOPHER EMMET

IT is a thankless task to strike a critical note amid the almost universal acclaim which has greeted President Eisenhower's atomic proposal to the United Nations. Nevertheless, generous and constructive as the President's offer of uranium and atomic know-how to an international agency for peaceful purposes may be, it must be pointed out that as it does not involve international inspection or control of atomic weapons, it does not even pretend to deal with the danger of atomic war. The Baruch Plan, which does involve such controls, has been endorsed by the UN for the last seven years but has been consistently vetoed by Soviet Russia. Unfortunately the President did not reaffirm the Baruch offer; and while he did not specifically repudiate it, he did refer almost disparagingly to inspection and control as if they were merely a source of dissension, rather than the essence of any permanent solution.

Moreover, as the Alsop Brothers revealed, "Operation Candor," the idea which was the grandfather to the UN proposal, was originally designed to alert the public to the awful facts of atomic arithmetic. It was meant to call for a supreme effort from the American people: first, to make the great sacrifices necessary to establish the minimum of atomic defense; and second, squarely to face not only the physical dangers but the political and moral dilemmas which the new weapons present. Yet such has been the ballyhoo about the President's militarily irrelevant proposal, that if the Russians should now agree to the plan it may inspire the false assumption that the first step has already been taken toward an atomic solution which would make immense sacrifices for atomic defense unnecessary.

As the President said, nothing can give the American people anything like complete protection in the atomic age, but the fact remains that the greater the defense effort the less total would be the destruction. Moreover, the best possible defense is the best hope that the U.S. would survive to win an atomic war, if the Soviets were mad enough to launch it. Without a far better defense than we have now, our power and our will to retaliate, let alone fully to recover from a great atomic attack, remain in doubt. Yet that retaliatory power is the *only* real deterrent against a Soviet attack. *This means that the scale of our defense preparation is a vital part of our effort to convince the Soviets that it would be suicidal to start such a war.*

Admittedly, if the development of nuclear weapons continues its present almost geometric progression, then even a partly effective defense soon may become impossible, although a new scientific development may be be able to neutralize this trend. But in any case, the prospect that any defense will later become futile or obsolete is no excuse for failing to do whatever we can during the present critical years.

Despite the hopeful impression that the danger of war has receded, there is reason to believe that the danger of all-out atomic war will be greater during the approaching period than later, when the scale of weapons will make them ever more difficult to use. Moreover, it is surely in the American interest to force decisions leading to the control of these weapons now while we still have a passing advantage. This, then, is the period when we should be prepared to make the greatest sacrifices to strengthen our bargaining position.

ON the diplomatic and propaganda front the President's UN speech was temporarily immensely effective in dramatizing *our* will for peace but, by the same token, if the Soviets do accept it, this might be taken as proof of *their* will to peace. Even the Soviet agreement to negotiate about the President's proposal has already inspired some optimistic comment in the West, in spite of the fact that their reply repeated all the old Soviet demands for banning atomic weapons *without* inspection.

Although the ways of the Kremlin are inscrutable, in this case it seems clear that the Soviets have much to gain and little to lose by accepting the President's program. Since it is militarily meaningless, they could use the good will aroused by their acceptance as propaganda to win support for their other demands.

Mr Emmet is a New York publicist and is a radio commentator for Station WEVD.

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America long ago gave the real proof of its peaceful and unselfish policy on atomic energy through the Baruch Plan, by which we offered to give up all our atomic weapons and production-headstart to an international organization with *real* power of inspection—if the Russians would do likewise. We made this offer at a time when the Soviets had no atomic bombs. We have repeated it ever since. The President's fine speech of April 16 went beyond the Baruch Plan with a plan for internationally controlled general disarmament, offering to give most of the money we saved for a vast peaceful development of backward areas.

That offer thrilled the world. What was really needed was a dramatic reaffirmation of this offer by the President, explaining it in simple words. Its logic and its

justice are unanswerable, and all the advantages of the peaceful use of atomic energy are included. He should have presented his new atomic pool proposal as a supplement to the larger plan in an important but militarily irrelevant field.

The theory of the President's new plan is that the "relaxation of tension," which it is designed to foster, would bring a change of heart in the Kremlin. This suggests a return to the theory indulged in at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam that American generosity would overcome Soviet "fears." But on the record, is there not much more reason to believe that anything which reduces Soviet fear of our present and passing atomic superiority, automatically reduces our greatest bargaining asset to get Soviet concessions on atomic energy or anything else, before it is too late?

When an aggressive totalitarian power faces a coalition of democracies, with all the divisions and temptations for wishful thinking and rosy promises to which democratic politicians are subject, is not the "relaxation of tension" precisely what would be most useful to it? If so, this would explain why the phrase originated in Communist publications. The lessons of history suggest that tension is an indispensable ingredient for that eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty, a necessary stimulus to the adrenalin of democratic defense. And if tension is a warning of danger, the only safe way to relax it is to remove the danger—in this case Soviet aggression and subversion.

IN the unlikely but welcome event that the Soviets did accept the principle of outlawing atomic and thermo-nuclear weapons, submitting them to foolproof international inspection and control (which experts believe to be technically possible), then a new problem would confront us. Unless the Baruch Plan was tied in with an agreement to reduce Russia's immense superiority in troops, tanks and other conventional military weapons as proposed by the President last April, its acceptance would leave the free world relatively defenseless against Soviet aggression. Therefore, any progress toward Soviet acceptance of the original Baruch Plan which might indirectly result from the President's proposal, would require a reversal of the Administration's new military policy which places increased reliance on atomic and thermo-nuclear weapons.

Until we can achieve a satisfactory agreement with Russia for proportional disarmament of all offensive weapons, we would have to increase rather than diminish our military manpower as a result of renouncing our atomic weapons. Such a renunciation might be forced upon us by the nature of scientific development, as we shall see in a moment. But any such sweeping reversal of U. S. defense policy would require some years as well as many political heartaches, because it would be incompatible with the demand for economy.

In his brilliant article in *Foreign Affairs* (January 1954), Professor Bernard Brodie of Yale shows why atom bombing is more economical than strategic bombing and why thermo-nuclear bombing is more economical than atom bombing. He also shows that the World War II type of non-atomic strategic bombing with the need for repeated visits to the same target, is now too expensive to undertake. He shows why strategic hydrogen bombing *must* involve the death of millions of civilians because the area of destruction is so great and most strategic targets are near centers of population.

The President's new defense program, based on the tactical and strategic use of atomic weapons, is hailed by Republicans on the ground that it is not only more economical but more flexible than the Truman policy, which was wholly successful in Greece and partly successful in Korea. This claim may be true in a strictly military sense but it is certainly untrue in a political sense. It has long been conceded that the free world cannot afford to let the Soviets take over more small nations, one by one. Truman's way of meeting this danger was to organize a local defense to oppose a local Soviet aggression and to support that defense, where necessary, by American officers and even troops,

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as well as supplies. The new method is to warn in advance that *any* new Communist aggression, direct or indirect, large or small, would be met by atomic war. Whatever may be said for this policy it can hardly be described as "flexible." The only really flexible policy would be to combine the old method with the new, by maintaining a balanced military program, using the weapons best suited to the given emergency. But that would cost far more than the present program.

Suppose, for instance, the Soviets and the Chinese Communists should increase their undercover help to the Viet Minh sufficiently to conquer Indochina, in its present divided political condition. Under our reduced Army manpower program we could spare no U. S. troops for Indochina or any other minor theater of war, no matter how vital it might be. We would have no alternative but to stand idly by while Indochina was lost, or to adopt the dreadful alternative of launching atomic war. And if we chose the latter course to meet some distant indirect aggression, how far would the public opinion of the free world approve?

Perhaps our atomic defense of Indochina could be confined to the local use of bombs. But if the anti-Communist ground troops were not able, without any American ground force help, to follow up the military advantage our bombs would bring, then the bombs alone would be ineffective. In that case we would have to bomb Chinese bases and transport centers near the Indochina border to halt the aggression, which would mean at least a limited war with China. If so, would Russia drop bombs on American cities, as the Chinese-Soviet alliance would permit? If it did, America would be inviting atomic attack on *our* cities before we attacked Soviet cities. The chance that the Soviets would launch total war in response to such a defensive American atomic action in China may be slight, as long as we hold any nuclear advantage. Nevertheless the uncertainty that we would take the awful risk might tempt the Soviets to risk piecemeal aggression.

YEAR by year atomic and hydrogen weapons become more cataclysmic, more dangerous to the survival of any civilization, more morally impossible for democratic nations to use unless the Communists used them first—and then it might be too late for us to gain anything by using them. As Professor Brodie says:

> The real significance of thermo-nuclear weapons used strategically, if it is feasible to transport them in jet aircraft and if they become available in any numbers, is that levels of destruction are likely to be set not by quantity of weapons nor even by numbers and quality of delivery aircraft, but simply by the numbers of larger cities exposed as targets. . . .This may be the kind of war we have to fight if and when we have a major war, *but it ought not to be the kind which we make inevitable through our military acts and policies.* (Italics added.)

Yet as Professor Brodie later points out, that is precisely the trend we are adopting. He writes:

> So long as the view persists in high military and political circles that *any* war which brings the Soviet Union and the United States into direct, and open conflict *must* be total, so long will preparatory measures be adopted which insure that the opening of hostilities does in fact precipitate total war.

The President's military program is presented by the publicity experts of his party as a brilliant solution which combines "business as usual" with tax reduction. In Pentagon slang, it provides "a bigger bang for a buck." The pressure behind it comes mainly from the economy bloc in Congress and the business contributors to the Republican Party who are interested in tax reduction above all else. Secretary of State Dulles, and perhaps the President himself, may be more the prisoners than the architects of this policy. Its spirit seems to combine the fatuous optimism of George Babbitt and the deliberate optimism of Dr. Coué.

Behind this rosy official picture, so skillfully presented with the Madison Avenue touch of Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborne, the grim truth is only partly concealed. That truth means fewer American soldiers to stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies where necessary to prove our solidarity with the free world. Behind them will be fewer American dollars to supply the tools for weaker countries to build a dike against Communism. The men and the dollars will be replaced by bigger and better bombs, which would have to devastate the lands and the lives of our Allies as well as our enemies, if war should come. All thought of liberation instead of containment, one of the slogans of the Presidential campaign, is forgotten. For even though most of the effort would have to be made by the enslaved peoples to free themselves, as almost happened in East Germany last June, some Allied and American troops would be needed to help organize, and perhaps defend, the liberated areas from a Soviet attack.

If we want to minimize the risks of the nuclear destruction of our civilization, and at the same time save the free world from slavery, then we *must* make the sacrifice of maintaining and even increasing the manpower of our armies as an alternative means of defense. We must do this in the hope that nuclear weapons, at least of the larger sort, will not actually be used. We must also maintain and develop our nuclear weapons for their deterrent effect until international control is firmly estalished.

In conclusion, it would be impossible to discuss atomic war in a publication with the religious interests of The Commonweal without at least a passing refer-

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ence to the religious and moral problems which the President's program presents.

With many heartaches, some Catholic and other religious leaders have reconciled themselves to the use of these dread weapons for defensive purposes, despite the ghastly slaughter of civilians which almost any strategic use of atomic or hydrogen bombs must involve. But can any church reconcile itself to the deliberate concentration of our military defense on the use of weapons which involve a holocaust of civilians, if any alternative exists?

The fact that any alternative demands greater sacrifices in dollars and manpower cannot be accepted as a valid obstacle in religious eyes, especially as the National Planning Association finds that the U.S. economy could, if necessary, support a military budget of seventy billion dollars without disaster. This means that we now plan to concentrate our defense almost exclusively on the use of the most inhuman weapons not from necessity but from selfishness.

It seems apparent that there can be no survival for the West without a greater sacrifice than the American people have yet been called upon to make. If we were incapable of a greater effort in this supreme crisis we would not deserve to survive. But it is not the American people who have failed to meet any demand made upon them in the last fifteen terrible years. It is the leaders who have sometimes been afraid.

FROM ITALY

The Divided Christian Democrats

Rome

THE most recent government crisis and the outcome of the last elections here are only small waves on the surface compared with the underlying crisis of conscience within the Christian Democratic Party. Things are happening among those in that party and among the people who used to vote for it which only a few years ago would have been undreamt of. Some Catholics consider these things very disquieting indeed; other Catholics hail the beginning of a new era.

Three bare and simple facts determined the outbreak of the crisis and made it inevitable. The first is that the Italian Communist Party is the biggest and best organized in the West. The second is that Italian Catholics have the closest of relations with the Vatican, while at the same time they often have shown an independent attitude towards the Vatican's representatives and have a characteristic Latin familiarity with holy things which in some other Catholic countries would be considered a lack of respect. The third fact is that the present Communist appeasement policy does not apply to the Church. Not even Tito has changed or mitigated his anti-Catholic policy. In short, in no other place in the world are Catholics and Communists as strong as they are in Italy.

The opposition between the more conservative-minded Italian Catholics and that uneasy lot which has been termed progressive-minded has appeared many times in the past. But never before has it produced so dramatic a clash as that which occurred just before Christmas at the Pignone steel plants near Florence. There the management decided to close down, claiming that production in recent years was not profitable enough to justify continued operation. As a protest against this decision, the seventeen hundred workers occupied the factories.

"Occupations" such as this have happened many times since the war because of the fear of unemployment; usually they have been directed by the Communist trade unions, and they have led to some bloody fights with the police. This time something happened which was quite unexpected. The occupation of the steel plants by the workers was supported not only by the Communists but by the Catholic trade unions, which were following their policy of marching separately from the Communists but, if necessary, striking in unison with them. Although it was known that the Catholic unions had recently become more radical, anxious to show employers that they were not "tame" unions, the public was nevertheless surprised.

The next surprise was that the lord-mayor of Florence, Giorgio La Pira, a Christian Democrat well-known for his piety, wholeheartedly supported the striking workers. In a speech after Sunday Mass at the factories he said something which was reported from one end of Italy to the other: "How can you expect the unemployed to be able to pray?"

There was an avalanche of support for La Pira. Backing him up were one hundred and twenty Christian Democratic senators and deputies, most of them newly-elected, and nearly two hundred bishops from all over Italy. He was supported by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Bologna, Giacomo Lercaro, a man whose name has been mentioned as a possible successor to the present Pope. (And, incidentally, a man who seems to do everything he can to prejudice his chances for the papacy. It is rumored in Bologna that he does not wish to be Pope, that he is convinced that he has more freedom of action as a Cardinal.)

THE great victory won in Florence by La Pira and the workers was only a symptom. All over Italy

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there are signs of a great division among Catholics on social questions. And as if the confusion were not enough, the Communists are acting to compound it. The Stalin Peace Prize was given to Don Andrea Gaggero, a priest who had been suspended and then reduced to the lay state by the Holy See because of his persistent association with the Communist-front "peace partisans."

There are other signs. The highly-respected conservative newspaper, *Il Corriere della Serra,* published an editorial discussion of *Rerum Novarum* which concluded that the social encyclical was outdated. And the Pope's Christmas message was generally considered to be a warning to the restlessly searching Catholics of the left, but it was unable to prevent a further rift between them and the traditional conservative Catholics.

Professor Giuseppe Dossetti, another representative of the Catholic left and a friend of Mayor La Pira (although with a much more contemplative and pessimistic mind), has founded a sort of cenacle for his young and devoted followers in the old town of Canossa. His ideas are even more unconventional than those of La Pira. Catholic youth organizations seem to be particularly attracted by these new currents. Some have broken with their elders and have reorganized around publications with such symbolic names as *Terza Generazione* (Third Generation). In the Christian Democratic daily *Il Popolo,* a well-known priest-writer, Don Primo Mazzolari, commented on the discussion of *Rerum Novarum,* reminding his readers that the encyclical is so remote from contemporary problems that during the Fascist regime many *bien pensant* Catholics said that it was the inspiration of Mussolini's corporatism. And he went on to say that the "law and order" which these Catholics now claim must be safeguarded at all costs is frequently nothing but established disorder.

How do the Communists respond to this unexpected competition? In a recent speech to the central committee of the party, Palmiro Togliatti dealt extensively with these new phenomena. He distinguished between what, in Communist terminology, he called "instrumentalism," or opportunism, and the point of view of those Catholics who are sincerely applying the principles of the Gospel to social conditions. In his view, the "instrumentalists," that is, the Catholics who go left solely in order to take the lead away from the Communists, are decreasing in numbers while the sincere Catholic social reformers are increasing. He seems to make this distinction for future use—the "sincere" sort being obviously harder to deal with than the opportunists—and says that he is not interested in the reasons for the two Catholic approaches, but solely in the fact.

Is he afraid of the Catholic competition? He says that he welcomes it. The Communist press has analyzed it with care, for it is a division in the enemy ranks. It is for the Communists *divide et impera* all over again. The Communist source I contacted on this subject, a man who specializes in Catholic affairs, said that a new social encyclical is to be expected in the near future which will deal with the new problems which have arisen in recent years.

THE dialogue between Catholics of the right and of the left is developing along the following lines. Both sides accuse the other of helping the Communists. Catholics of the right say: What is at stake today is far too great for the united anti-Communist front to be broken. To engage in interesting social experiments is criminal frivolity at a time when the enemy is at your throat. When the Christian world was battling to survive the Islamic onslaught, Christians fought united against the infidel in the Holy Land, in Spain, at Lepanto, Poitiers and Vienna. Thanks to the doggedness of the Christian soldiers and the skill of the Christian

generals, the life of the spirit could flourish in the lands which were saved from invasion. The tide of Islam was not turned back by experiments to find out why Islam enjoyed such success.

The rightists go on to say that the elimination of social injustice does not automatically eliminate Communism. They point to the Scandinavian countries where workers have the highest standard of living in the world. Each of the Scandinavian countries has an admittedly small but well-organized Communist Party. They point to Italy itself, where even the Papal welfare organizations have admitted that the people most eager to obtain help and apparently the most grateful for help received are also frequently the people who vote Communist at the next election. They point to the situation in southern Italy where many of the people who were given farms under the Christian Democratic land-distribution program still stubbornly vote Communist.

They say to the leftists: if you don't believe us, then look at how the Communists welcome the disagreement in the Catholic ranks! That alone is enough to

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prove that you are traitors to the Catholic cause, even though your intentions may be admirable enough. The only way to meet Communist violence is with military discipline, and if necessary, with the counter-violence of the Crusaders of the past!

TO this the Catholics of the left reply by pointing out that the united anti-Communist front has produced a dangerous situation: if the Communists continue to gain at their present rate they will take over the Italian government, by entirely legal means, within ten years at the most. They say that the Communists are dynamic, constantly offering something new, while the anti-Communist front is static, and *offers no alternative.*

The last elections proved that it was too late to go any further to the right. If the Christian Democrats were to move towards an authoritarianism like that of Portugal or Spain, they would lose the votes of the roughly two million anti-Communists who still place their hope in the left wing of the Christian Democratic Party. And should this happen, Italy would be like Spain in 1934, on the verge of civil war. The leftists say that there is only one chance remaining: to move to the left, in radical deeds, not in words. In short, to offer a viable alternative to Communism.

The Catholics of the left may then illustrate their argument with the allegory of the bandits and the living corpses. Behind the solid old walls of the Church, they say, the living corpses have fortified themselves to defend to the last their inherited treasures. They care nothing for the Church itself, nor for the things for which the Church stands. They are interested only in the thickness and strength of the walls, and in the treasures. The treasures are the condition of their existence; had the treasures been lost, the living corpses would long since have been buried.

By "living corpses," the Catholic leftists mean the feudal landowners of South Italy, and many of the tax-dodging industrialists of the North, who strive for monopoly, limited production and big profits: industrialists of the sort who closed down the Pignone steel plants near Florence.

Not far from the Church, the story goes on, there is a road—the road of normal social evolution, the road which permits the working classes to rise in status and eventually to replace the wealthy classes. In countries like the United States, England and the Scandinavian nations, constant progress is made on this road without any major crises. But in countries like Italy this road is obstructed; Communist bandits have occupied a strategic point on the road, claiming to express the "will of the people." But it is absolutely necessary to use this road, in spite of the bandits. And when someone uses it, he is hailed by the Communist bandits, who say to the world, "Look, even those who are not Communists follow us, for we are right! We welcome these progressive people!" At the same time, the living corpses cry out: "The Communists are attracting more and more people with their diabolical propaganda, transforming them into fifth columnists and fellow travelers! Even a child can see that the road leads straight to a bolshevist inferno!"

Thus the road of normal social evolution is blocked; the bandits and the living corpses are both trying to cheat or frighten those who are compelled to travel on it. It must be opened up, liberated from the bandits, and the Church must be cleansed of the living corpses and their corruption, and the corpses finally buried!

So goes the story. It explains, if it does not excuse, the fact that the Catholic leftists are not afraid of being compromised by the Communists, and do not see any danger in breaking the anti-Communist front. According to these Catholics, there are many people allied with the bandits who stay with them either out of fear of them or out of fear of the living corpses. Those people would welcome a chance to travel the road in better company.

But the Communist bandits, unfortunately, have had time to become very strong indeed, and so have the living corpses with all their treasures. Not all the Catholics of the left are as cheerful and optimistic as the lord-mayor of Florence. There are the pessimists, like Professor Dossetti in the old town of Canossa. According to them, it is too late to act. Italy is bound either to become a "people's democracy" or a more or less reactionary authoritarian state—perhaps with, perhaps without, a civil war. To them, the essential thing is to nurture their strength for the great ordeal ahead: to preserve the light during the great darkness.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

THE STAGE

MADEMOISELLE COLOMBE

"MLLE Colombe," the fifth of Jean Anouilh's plays to achieve the condition of an American failure, has provoked a fresh rash of critical speculation on the international dissimilarities of theatrical taste. A small quantity of this analysis has been responsible and illuminating, but too much of it sententious and niggardly, designed to reinforce a heedless public in its indulgent prejudices. Myself, I suspect one need not go so far afield in determining the cause for this failure: the fault, dear Broadway, lies not in the French but in ourselves, and our curious impercipience to the particular weight and quality of M. Anouilh's world. We have had, since the war, produc-

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tions of "Antigone," "Legend of Lovers," "Ring Round the Moon," and "Cry of the Peacock," but each has been either understatement, overstatement or misstatement: closest to the mark was perhaps the rococo fantasy of Christopher Fry's version of "Ring Round the Moon." Now, "Mlle Colombe," which—even in Louis Kronenberger's fastidious translation—disappoints, but provocatively, so that we are constantly forced to reshape its raw material into an original image which has somehow become deformed and obscure.

Characteristically, Anouilh's plays are songs of innocence and experience. They proceed, and achieve their dramatic tension, by the juxtaposition of what Maurice Valency has called "the purity of the ideal and the degradation of the individual in the material world." The playwright's authentic and formidable distinction lies, however, in his talent for giving these two states a rich particularity, inexhaustibly vivacious and glittering, and redeemed at every juncture from banality or a casual cynicism. "Mlle Colombe," to instance one case, is a cool and simple portrait of the vanity of love: it turns solely on the tragedy of an idealistic young man who loses his "dove" in a squalid, chattering, vivid nest of theatrical eagles, mistress of which is his mother, a truly grotesque old harridan embattled in age and craft and power: a kind of Madame DeFarge of the Boulevards, dropping slushy Alexandrines in a rich, plummy voice while she lops off the heads, hearts, hopes of all about her. Yet the "morality" of the slice-of-life to which M. Anouilh exposes us is so discreet, so embedded in the action, that every resource of intellect and sensibility must be sharpened to point up its bitter contrasts. The playwright is concerned with tragedy, not melodrama, and so he withholds comment: that task, as one critic has observed, he leaves to our consciences.

It is precisely in the realization of these nuances, echoes, that Harold Clurman's direction seems to me to falter. No American director is more sensitive to moral ambiguities and refractions than Mr. Clurman, yet he seems to have read "Mlle Colombe" as but another portrait of the romantic will discovering itself. To do so is to miss most of the play's bitter rue, the stain of sadness which deepens and spreads throughout it. Anouilh's humor, for example, cannot be merely grotesque: it must leave an aftertaste of disgust in the mouth, just as the fragrant charm of his heroines must visibly tarnish before our eyes.

Partly, too, the meanings of "Mlle Colombe" are blunted by crucial errors in casting. Eli Wallach, however distinguished his talents, simply cannot summon the style or finish necessary for a role of this sort. And Julie Harris, though never guilty of anything slovenly or common or inartistic, stays well within the range she so brilliantly defined in "I Am a Camera." Her present performance represents no significant development of what is perhaps the most impressive young American talent on view. It falls to Edna Best to give Anouilh's creation the fullest realization, and her showy, strident domination of a difficult part delights the mind and the senses as thoroughly as it dismays the heart. No one will deny that the failure of "Mlle Colombe" still exceeds immeasurably the success of many a lesser play, but the present production has also the unfortunate effect of nurturing the illusion that Anouilh is a sauce too subtle and exotic for our robust, hearty and oh! so unexceptionable American taste. (*At the Longacre.*)

BALLETS DE PARIS

SOL Hurok has, unhappily, failed to improve the precarious state of Franco-American relations with his import for a fashionable local engagement of Roland Petit and his "Ballets de Paris." M. Petit, a healthy young man full of spruce and ginger, and his company are pleasant to look upon, but dancing so innocent of any legitimate claim to the attention it would be difficult to imagine. The repertoire features, among other things, a fanciful little anecdote about a village bride who mistakes a wolf for her husband. We *know* he is a wolf because he does lots of wolfy things and every so often polishes his fangs, but he never does eat up little Red Riding Hood, more's the pity. Leslie Caron is charming and expressive in a vaudeville called "The Beautiful Widow" which, restudied and rethought, might prove a very agreeable *divertissement*. But M. Petit's "Carmen," the company's lecherous calling card, strikes one again as the most offensive reduction of a work of art to which we have lately been exposed. I am reluctant to call the evening at the Broadway wasted, but I am more disinclined to give it the smallest crutch of public support. (*At the Broadway.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED

THERE are moments of extraordinary beauty in "The Golden Coach," but they are like precious nuggets to be found in a slow moving stream that is sometimes crystal clear and sometimes murky with foreign matter. In telling the fable of an actress who plays Columbine with an eighteenth-century Commedia dell'Arte troupe which comes to a Spanish Colony in South America, Director Jean Renoir relies on symbols, charades and plays-within-the-play to the point where

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his meaning is hopelessly obscured. But he never fails to entertain or hold interest with this handsome film.

Actually the story itself is rather slight. When Camilla (played by tempestuous Anna Magnani, who throws her all into the role and perhaps throws just a little too much) arrives in the New World, she is in love with a young Spaniard (Paul Campbell) whom she met on the ship. But once she and her fellow Italian actors start doing their shows, she acquires two other ardent suitors: the local toreador (Riccardo Rioli) and the Spanish Viceroy himself (Duncan Lamont), who owns the glittering golden coach that arrived on the same ship with Camilla. So the actress has to decide and she seems to favor the Viceroy, certainly the brightest and most fun of the three. He gives her the golden coach, which has by this time become a symbol of high-toned nobility almost beyond mere mortals; but when the snooty Spanish courtiers object to this upstart and he tries to make her over, Camilla rides off in the coach in a huff. Later she confronts the three suitors in a very amusing scene and finally gives them all the air and offers the golden coach to the Church to be used in carrying Viaticum to the dying. Her gift of pure charity is announced by the bishop (Jean Debucourt) in a radiant speech in which he also requests that the courtiers attend High Mass at which Camilla will sing.

More important than the story are the trimmings with which this fable is decorated: the fine photography (by Claude Renoir), the stunning costumes and sets in Technicolor (this is the first Technicolor film to be made in Italy), the music based on the works of Vivaldi and some of the traditional Commedia dell'Arte airs, and the whole atmosphere of the old Commedia dell'Arte style which spills over into the movie itself. Those who like their movies clear-cut, with the blacks all black and the whites all white, will get lost in Jean Renoir's fantasy in which the heroine, confused as to where theater ends and life begins, triumphs over court intrigue and concludes that the only place to find real life is on the stage.

Although Renoir has tried to do more than could be done in a movie (with an excellent cast, all of whom speak English throughout the film) he should be applauded, even though he wanders off into stylized manners, for attempting something different in cinema. "The Golden Coach" is not a great film, like Renoir's "Grand Illusion," "The Southerner," or "The River" but it is well worth seeing.

GLADYS Glover, the heroine of "It Should Happen to You," is a little vague about what she wants out of life too; but of one thing she's certain: she wants to make a name for herself, to rise above the crowd that floats around her in New York City. Her method for doing this is to soak her entire savings ($1,000) in renting a sign in Columbus Circle and having her name printed on it in large letters: Gladys Glover. Just that and nothing more. Well, after she gets her name up for everyone to see, it turns out that a certain big soap company wants this very sign to advertise its soap. So they dicker with Gladys and finally offer her six signs in other parts of the city in exchange for this sign; and so the first thing you know Gladys has her name on six signs; and soon her name becomes famous; and soon the publicity boys latch on to Gladys, and what with TV and magazine advertisements and the slick work of a press agent, Gladys herself become famous —and a freak.

If you don't mind seeing a movie that really has only one situation, you'll have a good time at "It Should Happen to You." George Cukor has directed well, and Judy Holliday is practically perfect in the role of the dumb bunny who isn't as dumb as you think especially when she makes up her mind. And the men in this modern fable about goofy Gladys are just right too: Jack Lemmon as the impecunious documentary-film maker who loves the girl but insists that fame must be earned; Peter Lawford as the scion of a soap family who loves the girl too but himself more; Michael O'Shea as a hard-working publicist who doesn't give a hang about the girl but loves publicity. Garson Kanin's script has some very amusing lines. "It Should Happen to You" should leave you in a merry mood.

"HEIDI," a Swiss film which is being released in this country with English dialogue, was made especially for children. Produced by Lazar Wechsler and directed by Luigi Comencini, this version of the Johanna Spyri book is a delight from beginning to end. Handsomely photographed in the Swiss mountains above Maienfeld and in Frankfurt, "Heidi" will also interest adults for its good acting, beautiful backgrounds and authentic late-nineteenth-century atmosphere. Producer Wechsler, however, wisely told this children's story to children and it is they who will get the thrill of their lives watching Heidi roam the mountains with her goatherd friend, get separated from her grandfather, live in the big strange city of Frankfort, learn to read and write and finally return home again. Without being too sticky about it, little Elsbeth Sigmund plays Heidi thoughtfully and charmingly. You should not feel too put upon if you have to accompany some kids to this good-looking movie.

And I hope for your sake the theater that shows you "Heidi" also shows the French documentary "White Mane," which I saw with it. It tells the story of a boy and a wild horse in the Camargue region in the south of France. Directed by Albert Lamorisse, "White Mane" has many scenes of poetic beauty incorporating

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the barren landscape, the determined boy and the spirited horse into lovely moving pictures. The scene in which White Mane fights another stallion and the finale are a little grim for youthful audiences, but any kid who can take most of the children's TV programs these days can probably also take realism in nature. The version being shown in this country has an English commentary written by James Agee and read by Frank Silvera.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE TOTALITARIAN TEMPTATION"

Bryan's Road, Md.

TO the Editors: Mr. Lukac's article, "The Totalitarian Temptation" [January 22], is the most penetrating thing I have seen on the question of why non-Communist forms of totalitarianism have proved so seductive to Catholics. To the liberal who points accusingly to our record—Falangist Spain, Fascist Italy, Nazi Bavaria—it is no answer to boast of our anti-Communism, for with respect to Marxian Socialism we have, in addition to doctrinal objections, an institutional axe to grind: to wit, the preservation of our real estate. The Catholic record in Hitler's Germany is not a spotless one: except for the usual prescient minority among the clergy and laity, it is apparent that the early Nazi anti-Semitic depredations were greeted by shoulder shrugging on the part of most Catholics. I daresay the German equivalent of "We don't approve of all his methods, but—" was often heard in Germany in those days. When Hitler turned on the Church itself, the picture changed somewhat. In the United States many Catholics were strongly isolationist (and isolationism was in that case a form of self-centered nationalism) until Pearl Harbor, when their country was directly attacked.

Jules Geraud Saliège, Cardinal Archbishop of Toulouse, once said: "A strong Christian is not a part of a system. He is a revolutionary in the good sense of the word. He revolts against all injustices, *but especially those which do not affect him.*"

It is not surprising that the Catholics of South Germany were seduced by Nazism. Modern technological civilization wherever it has spread has smothered under a blanket of gray the colorful folk cultures with their traditional attitudes and their emphasis on cult, culture, and cultivation, to use Peter Maurin's happy phrase. Provincial songs and folk dances are replaced by centrally produced and commercially peddled entertainment forms. A drab standardization of dress is adopted in place of the folk costume, distinctive and speaking of its particular region. Women are emancipated from the home, and vocational differences traditional to the two sexes disappear. *Kinder, Kirche, Kuche* is a slogan Hitler could have borrowed from the farmers of Bavaria.

Nazism contained elements of an ersatz folk revival and had about itself an aura of pageantry that, fraudulent though it may have been, answered a psychological need of folk who felt disinherited in this soulless and rootless age, and who, like Miniver Cheevy,

". . . . loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing."

(*Mrs.*) LUCILE D. SISSON.

"POSTSCRIPT TO WAR"

Billings, Mont.

TO the Editors: Many thanks to The Commonweal for George Carlin's "Postscript to War." [December 25, 1953] The hatred in any war is dismally tragic, but the hatred agitated against the Japanese people during the last world war was even more so. Publication of these letters by young Japanese soldiers should help to point out that the enemy was no less human than we. If the personal experience of every man is valid when it comes to human ideals and emotions, how can we think that families of the dead Japanese

IF YOU HAD LEPROSY . . .

what would you not give for a cure? What joy you would feel if someone in a far off land sent the means for a year's treatment which would give you hope of relief from this dread scourge. You can do this for a real sufferer. Send what you can. Send $10, $20, $30 to purchase the new and effective remedy called DDS which is arresting this disease in so many so that they can go back to their people and live normal lives. Mail your gift to Rev. Edward F. Garesché, S.J., President, Catholic Medical Mission Board, Inc., 10 West 17th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

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(or of the dead Chinese and North Koreans today) are any less grief-stricken than our own?

It is this human condition that makes a Christian hesitate on war. It is so tragically inefficacious, so tremendously destructive not only of physical accomplishments and beauty, but of the human being and personality. The Commonweal is to be congratulated on its consistent policy of insisting that there is no simple "all-out war" solution to the complex and difficult problems of this "dark century." All-out war can only be a last desperate attempt when all else has failed. We must continue the search for the justice and honesty which will prevent that failure.

(*Rev.*) JAMES F. KITTLESON.

"THE HUMANISM OF HENRI BREMOND"

Los Angeles, Calif.

TO the Editors: Doesn't Alastair Guinan's inspiring article on Henri Brémond [January 22] tell something less than the full story of Brémond's relationship with Father Tyrrell at the close of the latter's life?

The article refers to "private prayers" which were said at the grave and later "misinterpreted" by the Bishop of Southwark.

As a matter of fact, weren't more than "private prayers" at the grave involved? Wasn't it Brémond who heard the last confession of Father Tyrrell and who gave him absolution? And wasn't there an exchange of telegrams between Brémond and the nearest Bishop as to just what "renunciations" were made at the end?

Wasn't it Brémond's position that Father Tyrrell, who was barely conscious at the end, was in no condition to be subjected to detailed questioning? That he had nodded his head in affirmation, when asked by Brémond whether he was "sorry for all the sins of your past life"? And wasn't it on this basis that Brémond administered final and binding absolution. . ."whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven"?

Isn't the full stature of Brémond, in this situation, to be seen in the fact that he won heaven for his friend? That he was truly the judge of the law and the judge of the facts and that his judgment, in the final analysis, had to be respected—even if, in the interim, Father Tyrrell was not buried with full rites of the Church?

If I am wrong in this, I would be glad to be corrected. Back in 1939 I happened to do some research in this field. As I remember it, the Abbé Brémond had his faculties suspended temporarily but these were only his faculties as a priest visiting in England.

Question for the theologians, in passing: if Brémond had the authority to administer final absolution, wasn't this binding on all concerned? *Then* as well as now?

EMMET LAVERY.

FROM LONDON

Religion in the West End

SAM HYNES

THE religious artist in our time, writing, as he must, to a non-religious audience, is faced with a difficult problem: he must find a secular analogy to his theme, an analogy which his audience will both allow and comprehend. He must, in a sense, find an acceptable myth by which to express an unacceptable one. That such artists go on trying, against such odds, is testimony to the endurance of the religious instinct.

This idle speculation has come as the result of a unique situation which existed for some months this season in the London theater. From September to January plays by the two most important religious writers in English ran simultaneously, and almost side by side, in the West End. Now Graham Greene's "The Living Room" has closed after some three hundred performances; and though T. S. Eliot's "The Confidential Clerk" goes on playing to full houses, the phenomenon has come to an end, and we may take the moment as apt for reflection and evaluation.

On the surface the two plays seem to offer little range for comparison. Eliot's "Clerk" is apparently a drawing room comedy as frivolous as any of Oscar Wilde's; Greene, speaking with unrelieved sobriety, approaches tragedy. Anglo-Catholic and Roman Catholic seem diametrically different—more separate than Canterbury and Rome. But the voice of religion, for all its various inflections, is one voice, and Eliot and Greene are more similar than they seem.

ONE is likely to approach a play by Eliot with mixed emotions of reverence and alarm, prepared to be pleased by the wit and the poetry, and moved by the moral integrity, but apprehensive of the metaphysic missed, the allusion unrecognized. Eliot's Nobelity overawes us all.

This is as true of "The Confidential Clerk" as it was of "The Cocktail Party." First night reviews of the premiere at the Edinburgh Festival were masterpieces of lofty hedging, full of the sound and fury of classical parallels, but signifying very little. London reviews were more of the same— sure of nothing but the greatness of the play. The *Times* man spoke for his profession when he ventured to say that it was "likely to be found

Mr. Hynes is an American critic who is now in London.

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brilliantly entertaining even by those who are left wondering what it is really all about."

The source of the confusion is obvious. The general tone of the play is, as I remarked, that of sophisticated drawing room comedy. The characters are urbane and elegant, the *décor* suitably Mayfairish. But this tone suffers, in the course of the play, a series of shocks which leave it at the end entirely destroyed, replaced by a creeping morality which finally becomes the dominant tone. The characters interrupt their witticisms more and more frequently as the play develops to utter cryptic moralisms, and leave us, like the *Times* man, wondering what it is all about.

The plot of the piece, though complicated, is comprehensible. Sir Claude Mulhammer, a wealthy businessman, has employed as his confidential clerk one Colby Simpkins, whom he believes to be his son. Colby meets Lucasta Angel, a young lady vaguely dependent on Sir Claude, and is preparing to fall in love with her when he learns that she too is an illegitimate offspring of Sir Claude. At this point Lady Elizabeth, Sir Claude's wife, announces that Colby is *her* son (as I said, it gets pretty complicated). The woman who reared him is called in, and proves that Colby is *her* son, and that Lady Elizabeth's is another young man who has been hanging about. Lucasta then engages herself to Lady Elizabeth's son, and Colby goes off to be a church organist.

Such a summary is indecently bare, but not inaccurate. The play is a comedy of mixed parentage, and as such outdoes even "The Winter's Tale" for contrived confusion; if the wise child comes to know his own father, it is only by accident. It is just here that the "secular analogy" that I mentioned above comes in, for the symbolic use of uncertain parentage is so common in modern literature as to have a generic name: it is "The Search for the Father," and it functions as an analogy to modern man's quest for faith and moral authority. Father, the personal parent, becomes God the Father.

Obviously, this interpretation doesn't fit all situations; that in "The Importance of Being Earnest," for example, though in many ways similar to the "Clerk," has no symbolic overtones, and cannot be made to assume any. But as evidence that Eliot's play has such overtones, there is first of all the insistence on certain themes, and second, the cryptic utterances which assert these themes. Wilde's characters are epigrammatic; Eliot's are gnomic.

The subjects on which they so express themselves are various, but all are essentially moral issues. There is the question of paternity, and of personal identity; there is the question of responsiblity; and there is vocation. The three themes are united in the character of Colby, who must decide who he is, to whom he owes responsibility, and what he must do with his life. Other characters serve primarily to illuminate these questions in him.

Thus the long second-act scene between Colby and Lucasta is largely devoted to the discussion of human loneliness, and its alleviation through identity with another, through love. Sir Claude speaks at length about vocation; he is a frustrated potter, who entered business because he lacked creative genius, and his point is that, lacking a true vocation, one must not putter at what one cannot do superlatively well, but must find productive work elsewhere. Colby, a mediocre organist, is prepared to follow Sir Claude's course. Later, when he learns that his true father had gone on with music despite personal limitations, Colby decides to accept a modest post as a church organist. "I must," he says, "follow in my father's footsteps." By Father he obviously means more than simply parent—he is accepting a new pattern of belief, and rejecting Sir Claude's.

The final scene of the play is, as I have suggested, somber in comparison with the light beginning. All the principal characters choose, in the end, courses of action which are at best unattractive compromises—Colby in his provincial church, Lucasta in her marriage to a man who needs her but whom she does not love, Lady Elizabeth in a forced affection for a son whom she considers vulgar, Sir Claude in a similar affection for his daughter. There is no question of happiness; one has a vocation or, lacking that, the solace of a kind of sacrificial love.

And is this, then, a religious play? In a literal sense, No. No one confesses to a belief in God; Colby, the hero, explicitly denies God, and Lady Elizabeth, the most religiously inclined of the lot, is more spiritualist than spiritual. The play has none of the deliberate allegory of "The Cocktail Party," no loaves and fishes, no crucifixion. The religion exists rather in hints and echoes and allusions, and in the major themes. Man is lonely and lost. He desires a vocation; he desires to belong, and to possess. Union with another through love may cure him of loneliness; fidelity to a vocation, however inept he may be, may give his life meaning; but he will get, at best, objects of love unworthy of it, and a vocation is simply recognition of the right to sacrifice.

This may seem a ponderous burden for a comedy of manners. It is. In "The Confidential Clerk" comedy and religiosity are at odds—they blend imperfectly, and in this respect the play is less successful than "The Cocktail Party," itself an imperfect play. For all drama depends for its effect upon the creation and fulfillment of expectations. Eliot creates the expectations of Boy Meets Girl comedy (we are *sure,* in Act II, that Colby will get Lucasta) but fulfills them with bleak self-sacrifice. There are violences which a playwright cannot inflict on even the tritest convention, for even the worthiest motives. Eliot does, which is another way of saying that he has chosen the wrong vehicle.

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GRAHAM Greene's "The Living Room" is much more overtly a believer's play than is "The Confidential Clerk." One is struck by the amount and intensity of the religion it contains. For while the situation is secular and universal enough—a young girl in love with a middle-aged, married man—the view which we are led to take of that situation is a religious and moral one, and not, as is the case in most of the current literature of adultery, sociological or psychological. The question is not what the lovers should do, but what the girl's religion will allow her to do. God is a limitation imposed upon action.

Not only is the play religious, it is specifically Roman Catholic. "Are you a Catholic, Mr. Denis?" the girl's aunt asks the lover in the first scene. Upon his answer rests one aspect of the conflict in the play: it is Denis, the psychologist and atheist, vs. the girl's Catholic family. Rose, in her innocence, is the battleground, the prize for which they struggle.

This is not an unusual construction in Greene's work; his best novels—*The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The End of the Affair*—impose Catholicism as the religious climate of the piece, and then go on to expand the specific moral issue into a universal moral statement. Doctrine provides a firm value-structure to start from, and specific moral problems to employ. Yet the ultimate statement—and this is surely true of all great religious art—transcends doctrine and discipline.

But although "The Living Room" is entirely religious, the religion does not obtrude, for it is the substance of the play, and not simply an intermittent "level of meaning"; it is religion dramatized, not talked about, and dramatized in a highly realistic form. There is, in fact, only a single symbol in the play—the living room itself.

The living room, in which the entire action of the play occurs, is at the top of the house occupied by Rose's elderly aunts, Helen and Teresa, and her crippled uncle, Father Browne. The room has been converted from a nursery because, as Father Browne explains, his sisters "don't like using a room in which anybody has ever died," and have consequently closed off most of the other rooms in the house.

"Perhaps it's the fear of death," Father Browne tells Rose, "—of the certainty of death. They don't seriously mind accidents. They aren't so much worried about your poor mother—because she was still young. She needn't have died. It's the inevitable they hate."

Fear is the one reality of the living room and its dying occupants, and it is fear against which Rose's love must struggle. She recognizes the hatred which her Aunt Helen feels toward her:

> And I know why. Love is normal. Love is being born and growing older and having children and dying. She can't bear that. She wants to build a wall of closed rooms—and in the middle there's

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this *living* room. Nobody will ever die here. Perpetual motion. Nobody will ever be born here. That's risky. I can camp here all night because I'm young and there's no danger, but a man mustn't come and see me here because life might not stand still. We might make love and that means getting older, running risks—in your precious museum piece of a room.

Love against fear—it is an ancient theme. Perfect love, we know, casteth out fear, and we might say that this is the theme of the play (though it might be more accurate to say that perfect fear casteth out love, for fear wins, in Rose's case). Here is the "secular analogy"; Rose's love is carnal, but in the end it is a more important kind of love that the play is about—the individual's love of God, and it is on this level that the tragedy occurs.

It is significant that Rose's critical scene is not with her lover, but with Father Browne, who has up to this point functioned in the play as a kind of Catholic chorus, commenting and interpreting, and urging compassion upon his uncharitable sister. He is a helpless invalid, who has been confined to a wheelchair for twenty years, "a useless priest," he says. And for twenty years he has dreamed "of helping somebody in great trouble. Saying the right word at the right time." But when Rose turns to him in her agony, torn between her lover and her faith, he can only reach out his hands to her in a magnificent, pathetic gesture of pure helplessness, and say:

Dear, there's always the Mass. It's there to help. Your Rosary, you've got a Rosary, haven't you? Perhaps Our Lady. . .prayer.

And Rose spits back:

Prayer! . .You tell me if I go with him he'll be unhappy for a lifetime. If I stay here, I'll have nothing but that closet and this—this living room. And you tell me there's hope and I can pray. Who to? Don't talk to me about God or the saints. I don't believe in your God who took away your legs and wants to take away Michael. I don't believe in your Church and your Holy Mother of God. I don't believe. I don't believe.

This is the climax of the play—the terrible last words overshadow everything else. It is not Rose's love for Dennis which in the end fails her; it is her love of God which is not enough. She commits suicide, mumbling "a childish prayer quite mechanically" before she dies.

At this point the play is quite as negative as is, say, *The Heart of the Matter,* which it resembles in some important ways. Like Scobie, Rose is trapped by pity, and entangled in the moral compulsions of her faith until she dies. The Church, as manifested in Father Browne, fails her. Her lover, caught in his own web of pity for his neurotic wife, fails her. And the merciless morality of her aunt crushes her. All these failures are really aspects of a single force—fear, which is the failure of love. "None of us loves enough," Father Browne says after her death. "Perhaps the saints. Perhaps not even them." Rose and Dennis are afraid of pain—their pity is the fear of inflicting pain on others. But, says Father Browne:

In a case like yours we always have to chose between suffering our own pain or suffering other people's. We can't *not* suffer.

The two aunts fear death as an ultimate kind of pain, and are therefore enemies of the life which must end in death. Only Father Browne recognizes that "Death is our child, we have to go through pain to bear our death."

It is the recognition of this, the inevitability of pain and death, that leads to the one affirmation in the play. Aunt Teresa decides at last to sleep in the room where Rose died:

It's all nonsense, my dear. Why shouldn't I sleep here. We're not afraid of the child. And there'd be no better room for me to fall asleep in forever than the room where Rose died.

This is the curtain speech.

An intensely Catholic play, then, about Catholic people and in Catholic terms. If it were only this, it would be of little interest, even to Catholics. But it is more than this: fear and love have no doctrinal tags; all men are involved in Rose's despair, all men may hear God's mercy in the voice of Father Browne. The play succeeds in what must be the final test—it persuades the general secular audience of its own reality.

I spoke before of "the one voice of religion," and suggested that it tied these two dissimilar plays together. What I meant is that there is, in any Christian utterance, one categorical imperative, which is: "Love!" This is, in simplest terms, the burden of the plays—man must love for his own sake, for his own salvation. If I prefer Greene's statement to Eliot's, it is because I think it at once more profound and simpler, closer at all times to the issues involved, and less cluttered (in fact completely uncluttered) by irrelevancies.

In the last analysis "The Living Room" is a vividly realized problem play, while Eliot's play is rather, I think, a *concept* play. The situation in "The Confidential Clerk" is intentionally preposterous—it is a rather badly constructed paternity-farce, in which the relation to reality is that of a charade. This is a defect in so far as the play attempts to make statements about real human issues—one cannot feel very deeply the fractures of Humpty Dumpty. In "The Living Room," on the other hand, the issue is real, and the audience is deeply involved in it. I know of no religious drama of our time to equal it.

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Down the Streets of Dublin

IT ISN'T THIS TIME OF YEAR AT ALL! An Unpremeditated Autobiography. By Oliver St. John Gogarty. Doubleday. $3.50.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

IT'S easy to see what Joyce grew to hate in Gogarty—his constant good health and high spirits, the absence of a sense of sin. They must, when together, have looked like a pair of my college contemporaries, of whom we used to say that X got drunk, but Y always had the hangover. Gogarty himself tells us why he grew to hate Joyce: "I was living with him and his constant air of reprobation and his reserve and silences annoyed me, for I took them to be a pose; and I detest humbug in any manifestation."

What Gogarty failed to understand was that while both he and Joyce committed the same sins—blasphemy, for instance—and are both shown doing so in *Ulysses,* for Joyce (Stephen Dedalus) they *were* sins; hence "his constant air of reprobation," not only of Gogarty's (Buck Mulligan's) doings, but of his own. Having rejected the Church, Joyce was determined not to be saved by default; he must insure his own total damnation. For Joyce was at heart an Irish Catholic, a Jansenist, whereas one would have to go back to Pelagius to find Irish antecedents for Gogarty's version of Catholicism.

Besides health and high spirits, Gogarty had another quality which a man's contemporaries find it very hard to forgive him—abounding good luck. In a college where it is rare for dons to "take up" an undergraduate, and at a time when it was even more rare than it is now, the three most brilliant and most witty Trinity professors of their day—Mahaffy, Tyrrell and Macran—took up Gogarty. A man might be forgiven for being a spoilt darling all his life long after such an experience. Later he became a close friend of Yeats, of A.E., of George Moore, of Arthur Griffith, founder of *Sinn Féin* and first President of the Irish Free State. Gogarty must have been something more than a mere court jester to keep the friendship of such a dedicated man as Griffith, but the only thing he succeeds in being serious about in prose is his own inveterate snobbery, which he learned from Mahaffy along with his wit.

Admirers of *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street* will find that after seventeen years Dr. Gogarty is still offering the same prescription, "the mixture as before." He even adopts the same time scheme, writing about the past as if it was all simultaneously present—hence the book's title—and skillfully mixing his past and present tenses. In effect, under the guise of an autobiography, he is retelling all the old scandals and all the old witticisms of a Dublin that was small enough for everyone to know everyone else's vices and big enough for each man to practice his own. The scandals all sound pretty funny so long as you think of the people involved as characters in fiction; if you don't come from Dublin and never knew any of them, they might as well be. In a disarming note to the earlier autobiography Gogarty wrote: "The names in this book are real, the characters fictitious." The witticisms, on the other hand, must be authentic—I've heard them so often before. They are as much a part of Dublin—or of Trinity College, Dublin—as its stones and mortar.

The only thing that a lucky man should never do is complain. True, self-styled Republicans burned down Gogarty's country home, probably in settlement of a private grudge or in the hope of dividing up the land that went with the house. True, other Republicans took Gogarty himself as a hostage and probably intended to shoot him. But he escaped, didn't he? And he received compensation for the house, unlike a Catholic friend of mine, whose family's bakery was burned down in a Belfast pogrom. Yet Gogarty's bitterness against De Valera, as Republican No. 1, has to be read to be believed; what he has written about

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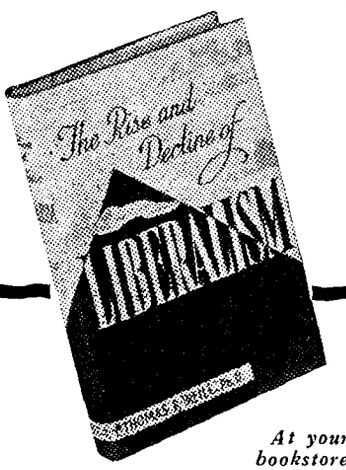

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Joyce pales beside it. Perhaps he understands De Valera's hair-splitting kind of integrity no better than he did Joyce's.

For me, the bubbling gaiety of three-fourths of this book was spoiled by the unnecessary bitterness of the remainder. Autobiography, no matter how fictional in intent, always betrays its author into sincerity at the wrong moment. It is sad that Gogarty should have to appear once again in this bear-garden where he himself is both the aging bear and the snarling dogs. I say in all sincerity that I believe him to be one of the greatest of living poets—as Yeats did, too—though his Horatian style is now temporarily out of fashion. The pathos of Gogarty is that he cannot earn a living by his poetry and conversation, and therefore must stoop to prose—a medium in which he has little faith or interest.

One Explanation

SAYONARA. By James A. Michener. Random House. $3.50.

By WILLIAM PFAFF

THE unpublicized but acute love affair which has taken place between a large segment of the American male population and the nation of Japan is the subject of Mr. Michener's latest book. Ten thousand Americans have married Japanese girls, and a quarter million have had love affairs with them, Mr. Michener says.

There have been a lot of American men stationed in Japan since the end of the war. Few have been repelled by that country; the great majority have been deeply attracted to it and have had at least casual affairs with Japanese girls; a substantial minority have loved it in a way different from the way in which they ever loved America, and have either married its daughters or have established what the Army delicately terms "illicit domiciles" in paper-box-like houses on the back-streets of Japan.

A marriage and an "illicit domicile" are the subjects of *Sayonara* (pronounced sigh-a-nada, meaning "good-bye"). The narrator is an Air Force officer, more or less engaged to a general's daughter, who falls in love with a Japanese dancer. He sets up off-duty housekeeping in the home of an enlisted friend and the enlisted man's Japanese bride. This happy arrangement is destroyed by the general and his wife, a vicious MP officer, and just in general the whole military establishment.

Mr. Michener's justification of this illicit romance comes down pretty much to this: American women are hard, cold and ambitious. Japanese women are warm, womanly, satisfied to be wives, not partners or competitors. Hence: ten thousand Japanese-American marriages, a quarter of a million liaisons, and a lot of angry American officers' wives.

Well, that is one explanation. It has a considerable amount of truth in it, although American women may be expected to file a minority opinion. There are, however, a few other factors which ought to be considered by anyone who seriously

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attempts to write a novel on the subject: the traditional submissiveness of Japanese women, the economic and social pressures which drive Japanese girls into GI towns, the lack of communication between Americans and Japanese (which can be a considerable aid to a love affair: if you can't handle any more than primer sentences in Japanese or pidgin GI-Japanese, you don't worry about the fact that you and the young lady don't have much to talk about); there are also the problems of the soldiers and airmen, their isolation from home, the impact on them of entering a non-Western, non-Judeo-Christian culture, the unspoken hangover of racism and war. The elements are uncountable. They do not prevent happy and successful Japanese-American romances, but they make them a bit more complex than Mr. Michener admits in his magazine romance.

The author has a lot of interesting background on the lives of Americans in Japan, and he writes vividly and easily; as a matter of fact, easy is the word for this book, which appears to have been knocked out between drinks in the lovely Imperial Hotel cocktail lounge.

The Transition

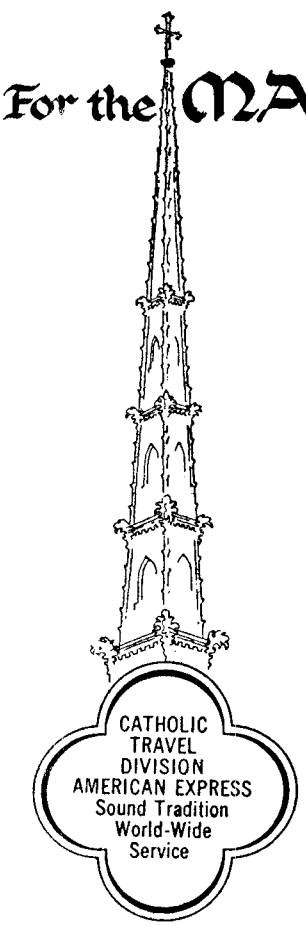
THE PORTABLE RENAISSANCE READER. Edited by James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin. Viking. $2.50.

By MAX FISCHER

IT IS THIS reviewer's conviction that one can learn about the characteristics and flavor of a historical period only through the reading of original sources. Original texts, both public and private documents, enable one to reconstruct the atmosphere of an era long since gone by.

The Renaissance was the great time of transition when many features of medieval life were vanishing and some basic concepts of the modern age were born. Only an understanding of these two features gives one a true picture of this decisive period. Most anthologies of the Renaissance stress only the rebirth of antiquity and the new thoughts which were to lead into the future. Because of the works of the Dutch historian, Huizinga, we have become aware, in a growing measure, of the other trend of the transition period: the decomposition of the medieval world. It is the merit of this anthology that this aspect is seriously considered.

The diligence of the editors is remarkable. They have brought much interesting material from little known or hidden sources. They present, for instance, a very impressive picture of England around 1500 from a Venetian diplomatic report. They cover the manifold trends of the time, from the pursuit of profit and the development of power politics to the search for ethical perfection and the new artistic elements in the theatre and in lyrical poetry. Considering the role religion played in the Renaissance, it seems to me that this most important subject is somewhat neglected. We have, for example, excerpts from Luther and Calvin, but none from Ignatius of Loyola. The rich life of the Catholic Reformation is presented only



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A New Look

CAPITALISM AND THE HISTORIANS. Edited by F. A. Hayek. University of Chicago. $3.

By GEOFFREY ASHE

UNDER the leadership of Professor Hayek, who wrote *The Road to Serfdom,* four scholars have here set out to re-write the youth of capitalism. England in the first half of the nineteenth century is now confidently presented as a land of increasing welfare. The real wages of the majority were rising all the time. The factories weren't such bad places to work in. The reformers were self-deluded cranks. Right through the Industrial Revolution the lot of the worker was improving. War must therefore be declared on all the historians who have taught otherwise.

It is a formidable challenge. But the contributors advance boldly. Professor T. S. Ashton, for instance, denies that a reasonably happy pre-industrial England ever existed. He claims that the countryside always harbored the blackest horrors, and that the servitude of children in mines and mills came as an emancipation from something worse. If so, one wonders how anybody survived in the country at all, and why nobody who witnessed so ghastly a desolation ever said or did anything about it. Macaulay lived when many people remembered the eighteenth century, and Macaulay criticized Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" because, while the images of prosperity were English and fairly true, the images of ruin were Irish and without counterpart in the larger island.

From 1810 onwards, we hear a constant outcry by a vocal minority against the encroaching nightmare. Near the beginning stand the Romantic poets — Shelley, Southey,

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Coleridge. Further on we encounter Robert Owen, Lord Shaftesbury, Dickens, and many more. No comparable outcry occurred in the eighteenth century; the natural inference is that there was far less to cry about. And the masses? Before the industrial Revolution, mob action was confined to London. The Gordon Riots had no echo in the counties. After 1800, we hear everywhere of "Bread or Blood" demonstrations, Luddite propaganda, frame-smashing, Peterloo massacres, trade-union struggles, threats of revolution over the Reform Bill, strikes, martyrdoms, and Chartism. Any historian who accepts the Hayek thesis must explain why the patient English workers broke out in one desperate rebellion after another against a system that was visibly making them better off. Hayek thinks that progress itself had made them capable of constructive discontent. Those who can believe this are at liberty to do so.

One notion behind the book emerges in the essay written by Bertrand de Jouvenel. It is argued that the lay intellectuals, after aeons of toadying to the rich, have attempted in the last century to ally themselves with the Common Man. Hence the histories which they write are contaminated by class mythology.

Well, there may be something in that. The re-examination of evidence which these authors have undertaken can do no harm. It may be destined to establish a need for reservations and modifications in the telling of a story that once appeared all too simple. But an era of degradation, bondage, disease, and ugliness cannot be dismissed with a few statistics about the "real wages of the majority." The question, for that time as for this, is not what the wages were. It is what the worker had to become in order to get them.

REVIEWERS

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